

Good afternoon. Thank you Mr. Chairman, and members of the Committee for providing the opportunity to express our concerns regarding this important matter.

My name is Suzie Mitchell and I am President of the Michigan Responsibility Council. The MRC is a not-for-profit, professional association consisting of business people, community activists and people from across the state who are concerned that we get this issue right. We are dedicated to the **safe, legal and responsible** cultivation, transference and use of cannabis by **qualified** medical patients.

We believe that the existing House bills, with your modifications have the potential to accomplish these laudable goals—but ~~they are~~ still need to be tighter.

The primary focus of the MRC centers on the soon-to-be licensed growers of medical marijuana in our state. We believe there are **too many** potential grower licenses allowed in HB 4209-- and that poses a **significant** public safety management concern. Here's why:

- Comparison state studies that show the demand for medical marijuana in Michigan may reach **80 tons of per year** depending on the number of authorized and anticipated card-carrying patients under the program.
- The current structure in HB 4209 has three classes of grow licenses-- one for up to 500 plants, one for up to 1000 plants and one for up to 1,500 plants.
- Under this structure, in order to meet the demand for the market, the licensing board would have to grant **hundreds** of new licenses to growers throughout the state.
- We believe this proliferation of legal growers will cause a public safety management and regulatory nightmare-- and it is **NOT** the responsible way to manage a new and highly regulated, growing industry.
- We also have talked with law enforcement and city officials who agree that having **fewer large scale** cultivation facilities-- facilities that can grow **more than 500** plants, whose owners can meet **strict** criteria-- similar to those, required in other highly regulated industries—is the **responsible, safe and accountable** approach.

Michigan is fortunate to learn from the states that have gone before us.

- Colorado, -a full recreational state—started with the same approach as HB 4209 issuing more than 700 growing licenses and now is scaling back--calling for consolidation and larger grow facilities.
- Illinois, our neighbor, which only allows for medical marijuana has 22 licensed facilities.

We are calling on you; -- our elected officials to limit the number and set responsible guidelines in the legislation for large grow facilities.

The fewer grow facilities we have, the easier it is to police and regulate the product from seed to sale---preventing dissemination of excess product to the black market.

As I said, there is much to be admired in the package of medical marijuana bills before you. However, there is room for improvement and there is an obligation for this committee to get it right-now. We believe the primary area of scrutiny and modifications are on the supply side... with the growers. .right where this whole process begins.

Thank you